NOTE: There are no minutes for March, 2017. That meeting was canceled due to severe weather.

WL PTA Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 3, 2017

WELCOME

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

AP/IB testing is beginning to get under way. Junior and Seniors who are taking AP/IB exams are entitled to General’s Rest. This gives them the chance to decompress before/after on test day. There is a form online and they do need to get parent permission

No Homework over Spring Break Holiday. Limiting homework over the breaks has been a priority we’re trying to roll out across the board. You can expect to see difference this year. This was discussed at length with the Principal’s Advisory Board (students). The idea started as a student recommendation. There can be homework over Spring Break if it’s previously assigned but no new assignments and nothing due the first day back from break.

We have new projections for next year from the County in terms of enrollment — we’re getting a smaller freshmen class that typical. For a few years, the Freshmen classes have been larger so we’re getting a bit of a break in 2017-18. It’s a little bit smaller than last year. Building crowding/space is going to be a little better than it was this year.

Spirit Week is coming. It will culminate in SCA Olympics.

There is a new course for students who are brand new to AP/IB - we have nearly 100% participation. For students taking the course for the first time, the intro/prep course is available over the summer. It’s also open to rising 9th graders who are planning on taking AP World History.

Last Thurs/Friday, the Admin Team played volleyball with the Freshmen. This is a program that happens twice a year (fall, spring) where the the administrators go into Freshmen PE class and participate in Volleyball with the kids. The aim is to continue to emphasize connection points with the Admin Team and to get to know the kids on a personal level. The admin team only lost one game. It’s a simple approach, but we have found it’s been really great in helping to make the connections.

COUNSELING

Summer School. Deadline for new work (and Driver’s Ed) is May 5. Some of the classes that are all online, some that are all in class and some that are blended (with some days in class and other days online/at home). The registration is online. Makeup and strengthening (and want to improve their GPA) deadline is June 9. Summer school is here at W-L this year.

Class assemblies are happening by grade level. Topics are: 9th: Academic Planning; 10th: Diversity (accepting others, accepting those that are diverse); 11th: College Planning; 12th: Take Off - New Horizons. All class assemblies hosted by counseling.

Parent Q: We have a number of kids who are undocumented and who parents are undocumented… given the Trump Administration’s priorities and the possibility thatt ICE could be doing their work in sensitive locations, what are you doing to ensure the kids know their rights; if their parents are picked up, they will need to have Power of Attorney documents put in to place so they don’t go into foster care. A: If an individual student has a situation, we work with that student to make the connections to people who can support our student are in place. We had some kids not coming to schools out of fear that they’re not coming here. The superintendent met with ICE and received assurance that they won’t be coming here to do their work. The teachers continually telling our students that this is a safe place. ICE has promised to have nothing to do with our school. if the event of something were to happen, we are to the Superintendent directly. We haven’t had any issues and we’ve had a guarantee that we won’t have deal with this here at school.

Stress Less/Laugh More: The last week of April will be Stress Less Laugh More week; before the big exams in May; try to help students feel more relaxed. There will be activities before school and during lunches to help our students relax.

Work on the master schedule is under way; course selections are in; we have to go … in June we send home tentative schedules; if there is a mistake that is a great time to get it corrected.

PRESENTATION - Maria Ceballos, Substance Abuse counselor and Officer Mazella:

Ms. Ceballos is at the school four days a week and then at Langston the fifth day of the week. The majority of our adolescents do not use drugs. APS has five substance abuse counselors; two in middle schools and three in high schools. Three years ago, that transition to move resources into the Middle School was made, with the aim to catch/support kids that are struggling with issues early.

Why are kids doing drugs? Curiosity, peer pressure, to be “cool” manage stress, relax, feel better. Kids are under a lot of pressure. Adolescence can have anxiety, stress- related pressures. We teach them coping skills, but they still use drugs.

The longer that you wait to use drugs, the less likely you are to develop a an addiction. (Another reason why the shift to having support in Middle School is important.)

Perceptions are changing about drugs. Kids are telling us that marijuana is from the earth, it's natural, it’s organic. Tobacco is going out of fashion; vaping is bigger than tobacco now days.

No one becomes addicted right away, there is a continuum of use:

non-use

experimental use

occasional use

regular use

abuse

dependency

We have plenty of kids who’ve experimental use (has tried the substance once or several times)

A smaller set of students move on to occasional use (special occasion)

Regular use; there’s a pattern that the person will use

Abuse: the use interferes with functioning at school, home, work). Patterns to look for: difficulties in relationships; change of friends; grades drop; activities drop out.

Dependency: that’s when the use regular, predictable; kids are using alone, on a daily basis; most of their activities are planned around drug use.

There are four risk factors that they can identify if you have them:

 1. family history of drug use

 2. depression

 3. hanging around other people who are using drugs

 4. starting at an early age

Most used drugs: (in order) alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs (opioids)

Signs to look for:

* order of alcohol
* sudden change in mood or attitude
* change in school attendance (big factor)
* less interest in sports, family
* discipline problems, secrecy

Most common drugs in our schools:

 • marijuana

 • alcohol

The trends we’ve seen is with the 9th graders: they’ve been experimenting more, but it fluctuates from year to year.

All of the drug issues we’ve had at school have been personal use.

Kids figure out how to get access. Example tactic:

They’ll go to the store and get a gift card; they will use the gift card to buy bitcoin; that allows them to go onto the dark web and find drugs; they order online.

Drugs on our radar but we haven't seen any of this at W-L.

Narcotic Pain Killers (oxycotin, percoset)

Synthetic Marijuana (Salvia and K2 aka spice)

Cocaine: we’ve seen zero in the schools

Crack Cocaine: we don’t see it in the school

Meth - has not made it into our schools.

Heroin and the opioids are on the rise regionally.

I have seen zero hard drugs in the school this year

Alcohol is in every single High School in the country.

We have had zero issues at prom. At Homecoming we greet each student individually to keep them accountable. We work really hard to make sure our kids are safe and drug free at our school events.

UPDATE ON POSSIBLE PLANS TO BUILD ANNEX TO W-L (go live date: 2022)

The School Board has boiled down the options on bringing new high school seats online down to three options:

 1. Build a 1,300-seat high school at the career center site

 2. Build a 1,300-seat high school at the Kenmore site

 3. Build a 1,800-seat high school at the Ed Center site

There was a community meeting on March 30. A replay of this is available on the website. This will impact us. Pay attention to the issue as it develops and make sure you make your voice heard if you have a point of view.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following slate of officers was presented and unanimously approved by the members present:

* 1st VP Ted Black
* 2nd VP Deborah Wooldridge
* Treasurer Scott Burka
* Secretary Tina Evans

Work to secure a nomination for President Elect continues. The membership will vote at the May 8 meeting on the 2017-18 officers.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Most of the big-ticket items have finished for next year. We’re hoping that the plant sale helps us hit our income targets. Overall, we’re tracking well to plan.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT: The two student council co-presidents couldn’t be there — the student council blood drive collected 320 units of blood. We are advertising for committee chairs there are 18 out of the 55 or so still to fill; we’ll send out another alert on Wednesday. There are some big jobs but also some small jobs.

Our final meeting of the year will be a picnic on June 5; it’s expanding to include all PTA volunteers.

Mattress sale on April 23 to support the baseball team and the cross country team; they have sheets and pillows; tit’s a lot cheaper in the cafeteria.